31. Steel Authority of India Ltd.
32. Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd.
33. Container Corporation of India.
34. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.
35. Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.
36. Engineers India Ltd.
37. Gas Authority of India Ltd.
38. Indian Tourism Development Corporation.
39. Kuderemukh Iron Ore Co. Ltd.

Withdrawal of Customs Duty on Newsprint

3752. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whetyher newspaper industry has demanded withdrawal of ten per cent customs duty on newsprint imposed by Government in October, 1996, on the ground of declining advertising revenue and sharp rising cost, as reported in The Hindustan Times dated the 24th May, 1998;

(b) whether Government while levying the duty, had given a commitment to withdraw the customs duty when international price of newsprint crossed US $ 575 per tonne, and the on 23rd May, 1998 the price was US$ 600 per tonne; and

(c) if so, by when, Government propose to withdraw customs duty on newsprint including glazed newsprint and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM):

(a) Yes, Sir. Government have received representation for exempting newsprint from the levy of customs duty.

(b) While determining the level of import duty on any goods, the Government take into account various factors including the demand and supply position of the subject goods, the interest of domestic industry and the interest of the users of the goods in question. While deciding the impostition the levy of 10% duty, a view was taken that the trend of prices would be monitored and if the CIF price of newsprint crossed US $ 575 per tonne, the need for continuing the duty or its withdrawal would be considered keeping in view all relevant factors.

(c) Customs duty on standard newsprint has already been reduced from 10% to 5% in this year's budget. Customs duty on glazed newsprint has been withdrawn with effect from 18.7.1998.

Loans to state savingsout of collections of smalls

3753. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA:
SHRTI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT:

Will the Ministger of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government provides loans to State out of collections of small savings and the loan amount in a year is 75% of the net collection in that year; and

(b) the significance of this 75% amount and why it can not be raised to 100%; Alernatively, when the loan is sanctioned against net collections in a year, why this loan should not be condverted into a loan in perpetuity?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Committee has been set up to examine several issues relating to Small Savings Schemes including the parameters of disbursement of small savings collections as loan to the State Governments. The report of the Committee is awaited.